

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 063039

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MARR, LE, US

SUBJECT: DANY CHAMOUN VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: BEIRUT 1200

1. WE APPRECIATE AND SHARE YOUR CONCERNS RE HANDLING OF
DANY CHAMOUN VISIT HERE. HIS MEETINGS WITH CERTAIN
ASSYRIAN AMERICANS RE THE POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT OF ASSYRIANS
IN LEBANON OF COURSE CONSTITUTE A SIDE ISSUE.

2. WE HAVE DECIDED, AND DOD HAS CONCURRED, THAT IT WOULD
BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR DANY TO HAVE CONTACTS AT DEFENSE. HE
WILL HAVE NO APPOINTMENTS WITH SEVENTH FLOOR PRINCIPALS,
DESPITE FACT THAT HIS BROTHER DORY SAW UNDER SECRETARY
HABIB BRIEFLY IN 1976, AT A TIME WHEN CHRISTIAN LEADERS
HAD HAD DIFFICULTY IN ENGAGING IN DISCUSSION WITH USG
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OFFICIALS IN LEBANON

3. WE ARE, HOWEVER, PREPARED TO CONSIDER RECEIVING DANY
CHAMOUN AT SOME POINT AT THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OR
ASST. SECRETARY LEVEL, BECAUSE: (A) IT MAY OFFER AN
OPPORTUNITY TO CLARIFY THE USG POSITION TOWARDS THE FUTURE
OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND TO CORRECT CERTAIN DIS-

TORTIONS WHICH HAVE EMERGED; (B) WE MAY BE ABLE TO

DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION ON THE ATTITUDES OF SOME PARTS OF THE MARONITE COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH SARKIS; AND (C) THE DEPARTMENT HAS TRIED TO REMAIN REASONABLY OPEN TO REQUESTS FOR DISCUSSIONS BY PROMINENT LEBANESE FIGURES OF ALL PERSUASIONS (AND DANY, WHILE NOT HOLDING ANY OFFICIAL POSITION, IS NEVERTHELESS INFLUENTIAL IN THE LEBANON POWER EQUATION). FOLLOWING ARE THE BASIC POLICY GUIDELINES WITHIN WHICH ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH DANY CHAMOUN WILL BE CONDUCTED:

-- WE OPPOSE PARTITION OR EFFORTS TOWARDS DE FACTO PARTITION; AND WE SUPPORT THE CENTRIST, UNIFYING EFFORTS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SARKIS.

-- IT IS VITAL THAT A STRONG CENTRAL AUTHORITY BE ESTABLISHED IN LEBANON. THIS IS THE MOST POWERFUL GUARANTEE THAT LEBANON WILL NOT EVOLVE INTO A CONFRONTATION STATE. SUCH A CENTRAL REGIME WOULD ALSO ESTABLISH THE OPERATING FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES CAN BE RECONCILED AND LEARN TO LIVE WITH EACH OTHER IN PEACE.

-- THE U.S. REMAINS INTERESTED IN THE LONG-TERM SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. AGAIN, THE BEST GUARANTEE OF THAT SECURITY, IN OUR JUDGMENT, IS A STRONG CENTRAL AUTHORITY WHICH WILL ASSURE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES RESPECT, CONFIDENTIAL

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SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY.

-- THE U.S. IN PRINCIPLE WOULD SUPPORT ANY POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OR POLITICAL CONSENSUS WHICH IS ENDORSED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IN LEBANON. THE U.S. HAS NO PARTICULAR FORMULAS TO OFFER, ALTHOUGH WE HOPE THAT THE PRINCIPAL COMMUNITIES WILL MAKE SINCERE EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE OTHERS--SOME OF WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE CIVIL CONFLICT--AND SEEK THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY TO RESTORE A UNITED LEBANON

-- IN THIS RESPECT, WE ACCEPT THAT A GREATER DEGREE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY BE INEVITABLE IN THE SHORT RUN, BUT THIS SHOULD NOT BE INSTITUTIONALIZED IN A WAY THAT WOULD PREVENT THE EFFECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRONG, UNITARY STATE.

-- THE U.S. REMAINS OPEN-MINDED AS TO THE TYPE OF HELP IT MIGHT PROVIDE TO LEBANON AS IT SEEKS TO RE-ESTABLISH ITS

ARMED FORCES. U.S. ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE PROVIDED TO ANY FACTION WITHIN LEBANON. IT WOULD GO ONLY TO THE LEGITIMATE, CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SARKIS.

4. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR INFORMING BOUTROS OF THE FOREGOING POLICY LINES WHICH WE WOULD OBSERVE SCRUPULOUSLY. EXPLAIN THAT U.S. OFFICIALS WILL TRY TO AVOID OVERSTIMULATING MARONITE HOPES ON THE ONE HAND OR CONTRIBUTING A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE SEIGE MENTALITY ON THE OTHER.
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